Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

LIBRARY RECEIVED U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, February 10, 1936

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "FEBRUARY FRILLS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Listeners, how about going on a spree today? How about forgetting sensible everyday food for once and talking instead about frills and fancy dishes for February parties.

I always think of February as the "partiest" month of the year. It makes up for its lack of calendar days by giving us an extra supply of holidays. And every one of those holidays is an ideal occasion for a party. This year, if you happen to be party-minded, you might have a St. Valentine's tea or buffet supper, and a patriotic party for the youngsters on either Washington's or Lincoln's birthday, and finally a leap-year dinner for your single friends on the twenty-ninth.

You can give very festive parties this month at very small expense. Even the frills and decorations don't need to be costly.

Valentine's Day parties can go the limit on dainty frills and decorations. Generally, red or pink and white is the color scheme and the heart shape is the motif. You can bring these two together in innumerable ways. For example, at a valentine tea, you can serve dainty white sandwiches cut with a heart-shaped cutter, and cakes baked in a heart shape, and strawberry or cherry or raspberry ice cream, frozen in heart-shaped molds. Or you might serve cherry tarts in heart-shape. Then at a valentine dinner, you might have crisp thin heart-shaped toast with soup or salad; you might have tiny baking powder biscuits in heart shapes; or a heart-shaped jellied salad or dessert. If you want your jellied salad to look like a fancy valentine, use your pastry tube to make a fluffy mayonnaise edge around it. Or, if you serve a red or pink jellied dessert, you can get the same effect by a fancy edging of whipped cream.

Suppose you want to make a perfect valentine of either cake or ice cream. Here's one way to do it. Cover each little individual heart cake with white frosting. Then paint a red arrow on top with red-tinted frosting. And serve the cake on a lace-paper mat. Or, to make an ice cream valentine, freeze the cream in heart-shape, decorate with a tiny red heart cut out of a red gelatin mixture, serve on a lace-paper mat.

By the way, you can cut red hearts not only out of red gelatin but also out of cranberry jelly. If you make them of gelatin, have the mixture rather stiff; pour it out in a thin layer; when cold and set, cut it with a heart-shaped cutter and lift from the pan with a spatula or pancake turner.

Suppose you want to work some of these ideas out in a valentine buffet supper. I'll suggest a menu featuring the heart motif in many ways. You can use as much of it as suits your fancy. Have a heart or have many hearts as you please. Here's the menu: Chicken a la king garnished with tiny red pimiento hearts and served on heart-shaped pieces of toast; Tiny heart-shaped baking powder biscuits; Tomato aspic salad edged with mayonnaise and garnished with hearts of lettuce and celery; for dessert, Peppermint ice cream valentines; Coconut kisses; Love nuts (that is, salted cashew nuts); and Coffee.

As I said, this is just a suggestion for an easy and not too expensive valentine buffet supper where the valentine color scheme and motif runs through the whole menu. But you can suit your own taste about how fancy you want your meal.

By the way, of course, many of those valentine food ideas will delight the children, too -- if you are giving a party for the younger generation. They'll enjoy a peppermint ice cream valentine or an angel-food heart cake. And tomato aspic salad molded in the shape of a heart is just as suitable for them as the grown-ups.

So much for valentine entertaining. Now about the patriotic days. Naturally, the color scheme for patriotic parties is red, white and blue. Tiny flags and stars and stripes are favorite table decorations. So are red, white and blue candles.

On Lincoln's birthday the special motif for centerpieces and also for food is the little log cabin. You can build a cabin of cheese straws piled log-fashion. Or you can serve toast strips or narrow brown-bread sandwiches the same way. I once saw a very neat little cabin at a children's party made of sticks of home-made taffy candy.

As for Washington's birthday, that's the date when you can indulge your taste for cherries -- and also for cherry trees and little red hatchets and colonial cocked hats. You can work these out in clever ways yourself without having to buy expensive food or favors from the caterer.

For example, a cherry and snow cup might start the Washington's birthday dinner -- chilled red and white canned cherries with fluffy white grated coconut over the top served in frosted glass cups. For a big Washington's birthday cake, use white icing and decorate with candied cherries and citron cut in the shape of leaves. Surround the cake with lighted red candles.

If you want little red hatchets to decorate cake or ice cream, you can cut them out of red gelatin, as I suggested making valentine hearts. A pretty salad for Washington's birthday is red cherries and white-cream-cheese balls served on crisp lettuce.

By this time perhaps you are wondering how to work the blue into the red, white and blue meal. Well, I would say, don't try to bring it into the food. Yes, I have seen blue icing, and even blue cake. But most people don't find unnatural color in food very appetizing. But you can feature the blue in china and glass and in linen, candles and flowers. These are days when people are using colored linens on every occasion. So if you have a deep blue cloth and napkins, remember them for your patriotic party.

#####